

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

1. (Currently amended) A process for producing an aliphatic polyester with a reduced content of residual cyclic ester, comprising:

producing an aliphatic polyester by ring-opening polymerization of a cyclic ester comprising glycolide or a mixture of glycolide and lactide containing 70 wt.% or more of the glycolide, wherein the polymerization proceeds in the presence of a non-volatile metallic catalyst selected from the group consisting of oxides, chlorides, carboxylates and alkoxides of tin (Sn), titanium (Ti), aluminum (Al), antimony (Sb), zirconium (Zr) and zinc (Zn), and a latter period of the polymerization proceeds by solid-phase polymerization, and after the polymerization,

pelletizing the aliphatic polyester is pelletized after the polymerization together with a thermal stabilizer, and

then contacting the pelletized aliphatic polyester containing the thermal stabilizer with a flowing heated dry gas under normal pressure while retaining the pelletized aliphatic polyester in its solid state, thereby entraining the residual cyclic ester with the gas and reducing the residual cyclic ester content down to below 0.2 wt.%.

2. (Original) A production process according to claim 1, wherein solid-phase polymerization is performed at a temperature of below 195 °C.

3-4. (Cancelled)

5. (Previously presented) A production process according to claim 1, wherein the heated dry gas is at a temperature of 120 - 225 °C.

6-7. (Cancelled)

8. (Previously presented) A production process according to claim 1, wherein the aliphatic polyester subjected to the removal of residual cyclic ester is in a form of particles having a diameter of at most 8 mm.

9. (Cancelled)

10. (Previously presented) A production process according to claim 1, wherein the pelletized aliphatic polyester is in a particle form having a diameter of at most 8 mm.